

Bedford Trails Committee

Minutes – Tuesday, April 8, 2014 – 7:30pm DPW 2nd floor conference room

Participants: Dan, Mark, Ralph, Kristin, Adrienne, Peter, Michael, Clem, Paul, Bruce

Meeting Minutes – March 11, 2014; Dan moved to accept the minutes, seconded by Paul, approved unanimously.

Bog Bridges

Bog bridge building day – recap from Saturday March 15th.

Mark reported that the day went well and they also cleaned up the garage storage. They also built a sample ramp, which could be used as an attachment to the 8ft bog bridge rather than building long bog bridges. The weight of the 16ft is prohibitive for carrying. The sample ramp was installed on the bog bridge closest to Elm Street.

Adrienne noted that Elizabeth was concerned about the length of the sills. Typically the sills have been 4ft long, which is helpful for providing stabilization. If the sills could be shortened to 3 foot lengths (6 inches less on each side). Another possibility is to make the bog bridge decking wider so that the sills do not stick out as much. Ralph noted that the shorted sills used at Carlson were very wobbly. Dan noted that there are situations where the larger width won't work and a shorter width fits better. Paul said the sills could be cut in the field if needed but we can also test a 3ft sill to see how it works.

The bog bridge at Lane School on the trail to North Road was installed on March 15th.

Existing bog bridges that are in a long line would function better if they were connected, similar to a boardwalk. Two sites that could be candidates for connecting existing bog bridges are Carlson and Cozy Lane at Huckins Farm. Peter asked how the angles will work when connecting bog bridges. Mark and Paul confirmed that material is available to do more ramps. Dan asked how hard it is to retrofit existing bog bridges with the new ramps and the answer is that it is not difficult.

Status of bog bridge approvals – The new bog bridge filing will need to be done since the existing order expires on April 15th. Massport bog bridges will not be installed since an agreement was not reached with the Town on who would install and maintain. We will need to compile a list of bog bridges that should be included in the new conservation permit filing. Springs Brook Conservation Area still needs bog bridges or boardwalks. Mark suggested that Springs Brook would be a candidate for having connected bog bridges instead of a boardwalk but it will need further review. Michael and Bruce noted that Springs Brook CA has been wet, especially closer to the Francis Kelley connection. Clem asked about the timeline to submit a new Notice of Intent for bog bridges and it is still unknown until the deadlines and hearing dates for Conservation are reviewed. An RDA was filed last week for various sign posts and improvements to the Town Campus and the Conservation hearing is scheduled for April 23rd. Confirmed the blazing plan for Town Campus, which is shown on the map that was included in the RDA filing. Also discussed the proposed wooden stairs at Town Campus and confirmed

detail plan with Mark. Mark and Paul reviewed design photograph of bog bridge ramp at Town Campus which was installed as a trial. The ramp length was 4 feet, which is the ideal length since the hurricane straps may not be strong enough for a longer length. The ramps could be used to connect two bog bridges. Kristin mentioned that there is also a question on the pipe diameter for the bog bridges and Elizabeth wanted to know if a smaller pipe size could be used. Currently the design is with 8-inch diameter pipes, but 6-inch diameter pipes could also be used. The new bog bridge permit application will include both pipe sizes as an option to be selected on a case by case basis.

Old Middlesex Road: Kristin reported that Elizabeth had done a site visit with the Eagle Scout candidate and put together a map of the trail proposal, including the 2 bog bridge locations. Reviewed the map with the Committee and noted that Elizabeth and the Eagle Scout have concerns about removal of the Japanese barberry and brush piles near North Road, which may need a professional since it is beyond the capability of the Eagle Scouts. Elizabeth may be looking into getting quotes on the work to complete the removal but the funding source is still unknown. Mark noted that if at all possible, it would be best for the Trails Committee to do the work and not use money to pay someone else. Paul will do a site visit to see if he thinks his equipment could take care of the clearing needed near North Road and not need to hire an outside contractor. Elizabeth wanted to know if someone from the Trails Committee would be interested in meeting her on site to review the proposed bog bridges. Mark will be away next week but Clem can meet Elizabeth out there in the afternoon on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday or anytime Friday. Kristin will coordinate with Elizabeth to set up the site visit. Paul asked if those bog bridges were to be installed under the existing permit but the Eagle Scout will be filing for a new permit since it involves more work than just bog bridge installation.

Mark asked about the status of Donovan Drive since that is a location where a contractor with a machine would be needed to clear the brush and establish a trail in the existing easement. Adrienne reported that the adjacent vacant lot is now under construction and that we will see if the developer would be amenable to granting an easement to establish the trail in the better terrain. The wetland map needs to be updated to reflect the current extent of wetlands that were mapped as part of the house project.

Trail Blazing, Mapping & Maintenance

Map boxes – status update; reviewed photograph of map box Paul installed at Altmann on a cedar post. There are 9 more map boxes that need to be installed. Paul veneered the map to the face of the box so we will see how it holds up in the weather.

Trail posts/signs – status update; following approval of RDA we can schedule installation for the 6 approved posts. Mark will give Ralph the proposed wording for the intersection post at Town Campus. Paul has 7 or 8 entrance posts that need to be finished.

Trail brushing – Michael has done some trail brushing recently at Springs Brook Conservation Area. Clem asked if a string trimmer is available and if he could use one for maintenance on an existing trail? As part of the tick issue, the string trimmers would be a helpful tool to

maintain unwanted brush. The Trails Committee does not have a power string trimmer. Michael noted that we would need to get approval for use of a string trimmer and be very specific about where it would be used.

Huckins Farm - status update; Reviewed plan for post installation that was included in the RDA last week and confirmed that the blazing of the trail crossing Dudley Road is now orange and the maps should be updated accordingly to reflect actual field conditions. Clem reported that the subcommittee met again on March 17th and that both Elizabeth and Tim Gray were at the meeting along with 3 other Huckins Farm residents. They discussed the easements and Elizabeth said she had given the information to Town Counsel and was waiting for a response. Kristin had talked about this with Elizabeth and she said the latest update is that Town Counsel has done a review and will be providing a formal opinion about the easements and that once we receive the opinion, the Conservation Commission would write a letter to Huckins Farm requesting the new trail bed easement so that the process can move forward. The remaining concerns are that the standard easement document wording would need to be revised and that the liability and maintenance will need to be clearly defined.

Proposed Bedford Circuit Trail - status update, website details & review proposed marker; DPW displayed some options for proposed trail markers (with and without QR codes) that would be used instead of painted dots. The markers would be displayed similarly to the town of Lexington's markers. It was suggested that the color white would be for the inner loop and green would be for the outer loop to reduce confusion with other trail marking colors. Mark noted that the green background color looked good but that the white background was not favorable. Peter noted the white paper makes the white look hollow and it would look better with a darker background. Reviewed the Lexington marker and noted that they put theirs on utility poles. Bruce suggested that the arrow could be separate in the center of the marker so it could be rotated as necessary and then the "Our Town Our Trails" would be stationary on the outside on a larger marker. The arrow would cover the proposed map of Bedford in the center but most people don't recognize the shape so it is not needed. One suggestion is to have green and red color options, using the standard blaze discs. Since these will be primarily put on 4x4PT posts, we need to have a marker that fits. Mark suggested a rectangle shape would be better for the posts and there is room for the letters on top and bottom with arrow in the middle. Dan noted the marker should say Bedford Circuit Trail. Paul noted the marker could say Inner or Outer on the bottom. Ralph continues to meet with various groups and there is still a lot of interest. With regard to the website, Bruce presented a sample interactive view of the map using Google Maps and GPS track logs that would highlight points of interest and you could click on icons to bring up PDF maps. It still needs content added but it's relatively easy to work with once we decide what to include, etc. Ralph and Bruce can work together to add the historical information to the website.

Ralph asked about the status of 35-45 Wiggins Avenue and getting the easement established. We have not heard any feedback since the easement map was sent to Tim White. DPW will work on setting up a site visit with Tim White, property manager.

Trail Guide

Review status of Trail Guide – Peter reported that the last thing completed was the content was sent to Elizabeth and Kristin; Kristin noted that Elizabeth had completed a review of the draft and that they were planning to meet and discuss soon, possibly next week. Update at next meeting.

Peter needs a new round of maps from Chris and a vertical/portrait photograph is still needed for the front cover. Mark noted that once the comments on the draft have been added, it would be good to distribute an updated draft. Clem asked if the Trail Guide would be available free online. The consensus is that the maps are available online free of charge but that the actual Trail Guide book will be for sale for a nominal fee, similar to surrounding towns. The book would not generate revenue, it would be at cost.

Updates from other Committees

Land Acquisition Committee – status update

New Business/Events

Tick Talk follow up: Ralph noted that following the Tick Talk, he heard comments about people wanting trails to be wider. Dan stated that he thinks the point of the Tick Talk was not to widen trails since it would cost too much and be too much work to maintain but rather to reduce the deer population, possibly by hiring a professional hunter and giving the meat away. He feels that the Trails Committee should not be advocates of widening trails but instead to reduce the deer population since tick-borne illness has become a serious problem. Adrienne said the Trails Committee might want to consider putting a letter together for the Health Department to share their feelings on the matter. Dan will come up with a draft letter for review by the Committee.

Trail Walks & Public Education

Trail leader T-shirt option

April – Dan had a good walk to Old Rez and had 2 people. He noted that Ralph's posts were excellent.

May 3rd – Paul will lead.

June 7th – needs a leader (National Trails Day)

Next meeting is May 13th

Meeting minutes recorded by Kristin Dowdy and approved on June 10, 2014.